

Undisclosed Desires

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Summary: Young F2 Jac Naylor struggles with things out of her control, until her consultant and mentor Sir Dennis Hopkins Clarke steps in and offers another way. Past!fic where Jac is an F2 nd Sir Dennis is her consultant. (Written in response to last weeks episode Dark Night of the Soul Series 18 Episode 27).

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A/N - I really want to explore that scene between Jac and Sir Dennis from last weeks episode, where he says "Don't bite the hand that fed you!" And how her demeanour totally changed, and she sat back quietly, as if remembering how she used to feel , that young girl with no family and no money. How vulnerable she could have been, despite her determination and her brilliance. Enjoy.

Jac rubbed her forehead, feeling uneasy. She could hear the chatter of the other F2's all talking about their next rotations, what surgical specialties they had applied for. The upcoming exam was the final hurdle of the F2 year, and instead of cramming like the others were doing, Jac was covering every extra night shift and every gap in the rota to keep her from thinking about it.

There was an air of anticipation about the whole thing, that gripped the ward in a palpable tension that had even the nurses on high alert. They knew as soon as the medics got stressed, they were going to be the ones being vented at, or yelled at.

All the pent up anxiety didn't seem to affect Jac, and it had the other F2's suspicious. The five of them crowded around her at the desk, one girl Jac particularly despised piped up at her.

"Come on Jac you must be on something," She cajoled, pulling herself up onto the desk next to where Jac was writing and swung her legs back and forth, trying to rile her.

Jac didn't look up, simply fixed her jaw and steeled herself against them and their intrusion. "Caffeine."

She snorted inelegantly, her long plait hanging over her shoulder as she leant toward Jac, lowering her voice as if they were about to share something secret. It was the kind of public school posh girl behaviour that irritated Jac endlessly. "You've been working every spare shift going this week - " Tabitha started, raising her eyebrows. "Hmm? Someone like you, you must know people - "

"I simply think having practice on the ward is more informative than cramming from a load of books." Jac cut in, refusing to rise to the insinuations Tabitha was trying to make. She was of the mind that Tabitha was likely to have more access to stimulants anyway, given the money behind her.

A smooth voice rose from behind them. "Dr Naylor could you spare a moment?" They all knew who it was, and soon scattered back to their duties out of his watchful gaze. She glanced round briefly, seeing the figure of Sir Dennis Hopkins Clarke standing at the mouth of the corridor, a few paces from his office.

"Yes, of course," She called, slotting the patients notes back in the trolley as she walked past, nodding politely as she passed him holding the door open for her. Once inside, she hovered in the centre of the room, hearing him click the door shut behind her. Uncertainty gripped her, waiting for him to take his seat.

Returning to his desk, he made a show of moving some papers aside to clasp his hands in front of him, leaning forwards. "I haven't received your application for study leave."

She put her hands in her pockets, attempting to allay the way her heart picked up pace a little, being put on the spot. "I didn't submit one," She replied quickly, being as bold and as confident about it as she could. She had hoped he wouldn't notice her lack of entrance, that a consultant had better things to do than read the applications of every junior on the team.

His brow furrowed into a small frown. "And why is that?"

She took a long breath in, held it in her chest as she summoned up the truth. "I'm not sitting the exam." Disguising the fact to the other F2s had been easy, but she hadn't banked on Sir Dennis being so direct. Yes he had vouched for her in the past, when she had run ins with some of the registrars or the other F2's, but that didn't mean he took any more of an interest in her than anyone else.

He eased himself back, dropping the formality and observed her quietly for a moment. "Dr Naylor you're the brightest junior doctor on my service," He said finally, an affection to his tone she hadn't heard before. He had always felt protective of Jac it was true, she made her mark and she wasn't afraid of speaking up, something which often made her unpopular. However despite the faults, her brilliance was unquestionable.

"Thank you." She did a small smile, clasping her hands together in front of her as if they formed some sort of physical barrier to the empathy he was trying to show. "But I'm still not sitting it."

Rising from the chair slowly, he came round the desk to stand in front of her, something magnetic drawing him closer to her. "As your consultant and mentor, it is my duty to further your training, not let talent such as yours squander," He murmured, the rich articulation to his tone undeniably charming. She hated how he and other men could do that; as if they could flick a switch and play to that quiet unspoken part of you, that had you surrender to them.

She bit her lower lip, averting her gaze to keep from feeling his affect on her. It echoed in her bones of men that had come before and talked to her the same way. Though she had no reason to doubt Sir Dennis or his interest, she couldn't help but hear their voices in the back of her mind. "I'm happy covering the shifts. Speaking of which, I should really get back to the ward." She spun urgently on her heel and stretched her arm out for the door to secure her release, but just as she got a grip on the door handle she felt his touch her elbow, causing her to pause.

"Jac," He hummed, approaching her now she was still and letting his touch wrap round her upper arm. "I'm not letting you walk out of here."

Something turned in the pit of her stomach then. "I just â€¦ I can't take the exam." She didn't face him, or meet his gaze, but kept her focus on the door handle and her breathing. Admitting to herself that the way he was touching her had her breathing shallow, along with the prospect of confessing to him; a consultant she admired the work and skill of every single day. To tell this respected man that she couldn't afford the cost of the exam would be, mortifying.

"I know how much you want to be a surgeon," He uttered softly. "You're bright, dedicated, brilliant even - " He manoeuvred her round to face him so effortless a fashion she barely notice him doing it. She sniffed, knowing the truth was already on her lips.

"Medicine is the first real thing I've cared about, I'm going to give it my all." Her voice was so quiet it was barely a whisper. She refused to let her past hold her back; the lack of proper early education or having to fight for a scholarship to get into medical school, she swore to herself it would never make a difference to what kind of doctor she could be, or what kind of person she was. Her past didn't dictate who she was now.

He nodded, in silent understanding. Part of him wanted to make her look up at him, touch her under the chin to lift her rebellious gaze so he could see the hunger in her eyes, that desperation to succeed, to be recognised. "You know as well as I do, that you could pass this exam with one hand tied behind your back," He stated, remaining professional and tucking it instead in his pocket.

"I know!" She suddenly exploded in frustration, letting go of the only thing grounding her, taking her hand from the door to ball them at her waist. "Look, I know I'm as good a doctor if not better than the others out there but I don't hail from the same â€¦ social strata as them!" She growled, forcefully, forcing back any further sign of emotion from her features despite the subversive tears welling up against her will.

He found her eyes not hungry like expected, but angry and resentful.

"So its a case of money," He said, firm in his understanding. He folded his arms then, waiting for the truth.

She panted a few hard breaths to will away the frustration bidding in waves in her chest, gaze fixed on a spot on the floor past him. He was seeing a side of her that she didn't willingly let anyone see, and she hated him for it.

He slowly tapped his finger on his arm where it was folded, a tingling sense of anticipation unexpectedly gripping him. "How much do you need?"

Her breath puffed out her chest in a gasp. "I'm sorry?"

"The exam. How much is it." The way he was so measured and calm in the face of her utter submission exasperated her. But she kept control of herself, sensing the opportunity before her.

Wetting her lower lip with her tongue, she drew her shoulders back slowly, letting the bitterness and the tension dissipate from her with each breath. "I wouldn't ask - " She started, something clicking in her that dictated her movements, subtle and changed, tilting her head ever so slightly as she risked raising her eyes to meet his when she said it. "Two thousand pounds."

He nodded quietly, pondering the change in her then, or if he was simply seeing things he wished to see. "I'm assuming payroll will have your bank details." He leant around a little, to scribble the amount down on the loose notepad on his desk. "I'll have the money wired to your account by the end of play."

Jac puffed, disbelief still tainting her. "You mean it."

"Like I said, I wont let talent like yours fall by the wayside," He smiled, tucking his hands in his trouser pockets casually. The amount was insignificant to him, but what it represented was far more important. He knew the offer of an olive branch was not simply allowing a junior doctor through her exam; it meant she needed him. That without him, she could not progress this year.

The sincerity to her smile was something he had not experienced before, and he couldn't help but return the warmth as she said it. "Thank you, Mr Hopkins Clarke."

He chuckled lightly, enjoying experiencing the softer side of her. "Please, Jac, I don't need 'Mr' to make me feel older than I am. Sir Dennis, is sufficient," He hummed, the gesture of using her first name and his he hoped would build a certain, trust, between them. A closer relationship than he allowed the others.

She nodded, accepting his wish. "I'd appreciate it if you could find it, not to tell the other F2's. I need a level playing field with them, I need to be taken seriously for my own merit," She said in all seriousness. She wouldn't let this change anything, not in her practice and certainly not from him. She wouldn't be the girl to get by on favours and investment, it would ruin any sort of reputation she could build. She had to keep it between them. "I can't pass because my consultant is offering to be my hedge fund."

He tilted his head, musing her concerns silently. She had a point,

and he was appreciative of her professionalism even now when he was taking things into his own hands, taking control of her training, to an certain extent. "Everyone needs a sponsor, or support, at certain times in their life." He countered, ensuring she knew that he was making an investment, not giving her a free pass. "Theres no rule that says it has to be a family member paying for you."

The fact someone could believe in her enough to support her this way was something she had never experienced. An emotion she was lost in feeling. "I'm really very grateful," She murmured, shaking her head at herself and looking away, wanting to hide and blink away the overwhelming sensation she was feeling and didn't know what to do with. It was a sense of security and paternal concern he was giving her, knowing she could go to him any he wouldn't judge her, or scold or dismiss her. He was there for her, and that safety felt so, warm.

When she finally looked up at him, his breath caught in his chest. She was so young and lost, and he had given her that glimmer of hope. He could sense a loyalty flourishing in her, and if he had to keep paying her exams to hold that loyalty, then it was a small price to pay. "You have such potential, Jac," He hummed softly, closing the distance between them and gazing at her, something mesmerising about the way she looked back at him. He lifted his hand, tentative at first, and brushed her cheek lightly with the back of his fingers, a tenderness she had never experienced before.

Jac felt a twinge in her stomach, but she didn't move away. She couldn't understand the way he came close to her, but she daren't risk stepping back and breaking that connection. She told herself she knew what she was doing, that a few moments ago she had wet her lip and tilted her head enamouring herself to him. It was her choice to accept the money. To engage his attention, if it got her what she wanted.

He hummed. He let his fingers fall away, but held her gaze determinedly. "Don't forget this opportunity I'm giving you."

She shook her head quietly. "I wont."

He felt something intangible between them, and had grasped it only for a moment, like a long lost sensation ghosting over him and through his body. But it had been enough to tell him that it wasn't simply protective instinct or professional interest he had in her. It was sufficient to have taken a hold in him, like the first taste of a drug that wouldn't yet be enough.

End
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